

REMARKS

Claims 1-30 were pending in the Application. In the foregoing amendments, claims 1, 6-9, 12, 15, 17-18, 20, 24-30 have been amended. Claims 4-5, 10, 14, 16, 22-23 have been canceled without prejudice and disclaimer to the subject matter disclosed therein. New Claims 31-33 have been added. Support for these amendments can be found in the specification and claims of the application as filed. No new matter has been added by these amendments.

Applicants respectfully request entry of the foregoing amendments and reconsideration of the application in light of the amendments above and the remarks below.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Office Action rejected Claims 28 and 29 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first and second paragraphs. In the forgoing amendments, claims 28 and 29 have been amended, thereby obviating these rejections.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Office Action rejected Claims 1-4, 7-15, 18, 20-22, 24-30 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ludwig et al., hereinafter Ludwig (U.S. Patent No. 6,697,352).

In the forgoing amendments, independent claim 1 has been amended to explicitly incorporate all of the limitations of claim 5 (and intervening claim 4), which was objected to in the Office Action. Thus, the amended claim 1 is allowable. Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claim 1 be withdrawn.

Claim 6, which was objected to in the Office Action, has been rewritten in independent form to explicitly incorporate all of the limitations of its original base claim (claim 1), and is therefore allowable.

Independent claim 7, as amended, recites features analogous to features found in the amended claim 1, and is therefore allowable for at least the reasons given above with respect to claim 1. Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claim 7 be withdrawn.

IN THE DRAWINGS

Please amend the drawings as follows:

In FIG. 1, please change reference numeral “112” to “114;” please change reference numeral “114” to “112.”

In FIG. 2, please change reference numerals “202,” “204,” “206” and “208” to “102,” “104,” “106” and “108,” respectively.

Independent claim 15 has been amended to explicitly incorporate all of the limitations of claim 16, which was objected to in the Office Action. Thus, the amended claim 15 is allowable. Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claim 15 be withdrawn.

Claim 17, which was objected to in the Office Action, has been rewritten in independent form to explicitly incorporate all of the limitations of its original base claim (claim 15), and is therefore allowable. Applicants respectfully request that the objection of claim 17 be withdrawn.

Independent claim 18, as amended, recites features analogous to features found in the amended claim 17, and is therefore allowable for at least the reasons given above with respect to claim 17. Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claim 18 be withdrawn.

Independent claim 20 has been amended to explicitly incorporate all of the limitations of claim 23 (and intervening claim 22), which was objected to in the Office Action. Thus, the amended claim 20 is allowable. Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claim 20 be withdrawn.

Claim 24 has been rewritten in independent form and includes features analogous to features found in the amended claim 6. Thus, the amended claim 24 is allowable for at least the reasons given above with respect to claim 6. Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claim 6 be withdrawn.

Independent claim 25, as amended, recites features analogous to features found in the amended claim 1, and is therefore allowable for at least the reasons given above with respect to claim 1. Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claim 25 be withdrawn.

Independent claim 27, as amended, recites features analogous to features found in the amended claim 15, and is therefore allowable for at least the reasons given above with respect to claim 15. Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claim 15 be withdrawn.

Claims 2-3, 8-9, 12-13, 21, 26, 28-30, 33 depend respectively from independent claims 1, 7, 20, 27, and therefore are allowable as well. Applicants respectfully request that the rejections of these claims be withdrawn.

New claim 31 recites features analogous to features found in the allowed claim 19, and is therefore allowable for at least the reasons that claim 19 is allowable. New claim 32 depends from claim 31 and therefore is also allowable.

Allowable Subject Matter

In the Office Action, claims 5, 6, 16, 17 and 23 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 19 was allowed. Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter.

A statement of reasons for claims 5, 6, 16, 17, 23 being allowable was set forth by the Examiner in the Office Action. While Applicants agree that these claims are allowable for at least the reasons set forth in the Examiner's statement, Applicants submit that the invention as recited by the claims and as described in the present application is patentable over the art of record for reasons in addition to those listed in the Examiner's statement. Accordingly, Applicants reserve the right to pursue claims of different scope from those in the present application.

Drawings

Applicants submit herewith corrected formal drawings to replace the originally filed drawings. These amendments to the drawings do not make any substantive changes or introduce any new material but are simply the correction of typographical errors, which are consistent with the specification as originally submitted. Therefore, approval and entry of the above amendments are respectfully requested.

Specification

Applicants provide herewith amendments to the specification. The amendments to the specification are made by presenting marked up replacement paragraphs which identify changes made relative to the immediate prior version.

The changes made are primarily typographical or grammatical in nature, or involve minor clarifications of some wordings.

Applicants submit these changes add no new matter to the application and are fully supported by the original disclosure.

REQUEST FOR ALLOWANCE

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that all pending claims in the application are patentable. Accordingly, reconsideration and allowance of this application are earnestly solicited. Should any issues remain unresolved, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: 

Jian Ma, Reg. No. 48,820

Telephone: (858) 651-5527

QUALCOMM Incorporated
5775 Morehouse Drive
San Diego, California 92121
Telephone: (858) 651-4125
Facsimile: (858) 658-2502